POST NEWSLETTER JULY 2024

MEETINGS IN JULY

POST

July 23rd, 7 pm

COUNTY

No meeting

WOMEN VETERANS

No meeting

SAL

July 9th, 6:30 pm

AUXILIARY

No meeting

HOME ASSOCIATION

July 22nd , 7:00 pm

GOLD STAR RIDERS

July 30, 6 pm

VVA

July 17th, 1 pm

Important Military Dates in July

July 4, 1776

July 27 - Korean War Veterans Armistice Day (1953)

July 28 - National Buffalo Soldiers Day (1866)

July 29 - Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary (1775)

FLAG DAY JUNE 14, 2024

On June 14, the Baden American Legion held a flag retirement ceremony, cremating flags donated to various legion posts in the area. According to what I was told, the post destroyed hundreds of flags, in the manner directed by the U.S. Flag Code. For those who weren't able to attend, it was a moving ceremony and the Scouts did a great job. Here are a few pictures from that day.

While the clouds threatened rain constantly, it did hold off for the ceremony!!

JULY 4th, 1776 INDEPENDENCE DAY

JULY 4th --INDEPENDENCE DAY--No matter what you call it, it's a date that we all know and the majority of the country celebrate. Picnics, fireworks, games, fireworks, family gatherings, fireworks..we've all celebrated with friends, family, co-workers, or who ever our family was at the time.

But let's just talk about that date for a moment.

We celebrate American Independence Day on the Fourth of July every year. We think of July 4, 1776, as a day that represents the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the United States of America as an independent nation.

But July 4, 1776 wasn't the day that the Continental Congress decided to declare independence (they did that on July 2, 1776).

It wasn't the day we started the American Revolution either (that had happened back in April 1775).

And it wasn't the day Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence (that was in June 1776). Or the date on which the Declaration was delivered to Great Britain (that didn't happen until November 1776). Or the date it was signed (that was August 2, 1776).

So what did happen on July 4, 1776?

The Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. They'd been working on it for a couple of days after the draft was submitted on July 2nd and finally agreed on all of the edits and changes.

July 4, 1776, became the date that was included on the Declaration of Independence, and the fancy handwritten copy that was signed in August (the copy now displayed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.) It's also the date that was printed on the Dunlap Broadsides, the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout the new nation. So when people thought of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776 was the date they remembered.

In contrast, we celebrate Constitution Day on September 17th of each year, the anniversary of the date the Constitution was signed, not the anniversary of the date it was approved. If we'd followed this same approach for the Declaration of Independence we'd being celebrating Independence Day on August 2nd of each year, the day the Declaration of Independence was signed!

Above reprinted in full from the website CONSTITUTIONFACTS.COM

The tradition of setting off fireworks on the 4 of July began in Philadelphia on July 4, 1777, during the first organized celebration of Independence Day. Ship's cannon fired a 13-gun salute in honor of the 13 colonies. The Pennsylvania Evening Post reported: "at night there was a grand exhibition of fireworks (which began and concluded with thirteen rockets) on the Commons, and the city was beautifully illuminated." That same night, the Sons of Liberty set off fireworks over Boston Common.

In 1870, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday; in 1941, the provision was expanded to grant a paid holiday to all federal employees.

(1) Reprinted from the website HISTORY.com, written by the History.com Editors; originally published on December 16, 2009, updated June 24, 2024

July 27, 1953 - The Korean War Armistice Agreement

The word "armistice", according to the Miriam-Webster dictionary, descends from Latin sistere, meaning "to come to a stand" or "to cause to stand or stop," combined with arma, meaning "weapons." So literally it means "the cessation of arms".

The Korean War officially ended on July 27, 1953. At 10 a.m. It was the end of the longest negotiated armistice in history: 158 meetings spread over two years and 17 days. That evening at 10 p.m. the truce went into effect. The Korean Armistice Agreement is somewhat exceptional in that it is purely a military document—no nation is a signatory to the agreement.

The armistice, while it stopped hostilities, was not a permanent peace treaty between nations.
President Eisenhower, who was keenly aware of the 1.8 million American men and women who had served in Korea and the 36,576 Americans who had died there, played a key role in bringing about a cease-fire. In announcing the agreement to the American people in a television address shortly after the signing, he said, in part,
Soldiers, sailors and airmen of sixteen different countries have stood as partners beside us throughout these long and bitter months. In this struggle we have seen the United Nations meet the challenge of aggression—not with pathetic words of protest, but with deeds of decisive purpose. And so at long last the carnage of war is to cease and the negotiation of the conference table is to begin....[We hope that] all nations may come to see the wisdom of composing differences in this fashion before, rather than after, there is resort to brutal and futile battle.
Now as we strive to bring about that wisdom, there is, in this moment of sober satisfaction, one thought that must discipline our emotions and steady our resolution. It is this: We have won an armistice on a single battleground—not peace in the world. We may not now relax our guard nor cease our quest.

above copied from the online NATIONALARCHIVES website: https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/armistice-agreement-restoration-south-korean-state

July 28, 1866 NATIONAL BUFFALO SOLDIERS DAY

Until I started doing the post newsletter, I had only heard of the Buffalo Soldiers from movies. Maybe if I had been U.S. Army I might have learned about them. Many of you may know of them previously, or from when I talked of them in last year's newsletter. But here is some of their story.

Buffalo soldiers were African American soldiers who mainly served on the Western frontier following the American Civil War. In 1866, six all-Black cavalry and infantry regiments were created after Congress passed the Army Organization Act. Their main tasks were to help control the Native Americans of the Plains, capture cattle rustlers and thieves and protect settlers, stagecoaches, wagon trains and railroad crews along the Western front.

No one knows for certain why, but the soldiers of the all-Black 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments were dubbed “buffalo soldiers” by the Native Americans they encountered.

One theory claims the nickname arose because the soldiers’ dark, curly hair resembled the fur of a buffalo. Another assumption is the soldiers fought so valiantly and fiercely that the Indians revered them as they did the mighty buffalo.

Whatever the reason, the name stuck, and African American regiments formed in 1866, including the 24th and 25th Infantry (which were consolidated from four regiments) became known as buffalo soldiers.

Mark Matthews, the nation’s oldest living buffalo soldier, died in 2005 at age 111 in Washington, D.C.

Buffalo soldiers had the lowest military desertion and court-martial rates of their time. Many won the Congressional Medal of Honor, an award presented in recognition of combat valor that goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Above information reprinted directly from the website HISTORY.com, written by the HISTORY.COM editors. Originally written December 7, 2017, updated January 25, 2021

Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary

July 29, 1775 249 yrs

As long as armies have existed, military chaplains have served alongside soldiers, providing for their spiritual needs, working to improve morale, and aiding the wounded. The Bible tells of the early Israelites bringing their priests into battle with them. Pagan priests accompanied the Roman legions during their conquests; as Christianity became the predominant religion of the Roman Empire, Christian chaplains administered to Roman soldiers. In fact, the word chaplain is derived from cappa, the Latin word for cloak

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is one of the oldest and smallest branches of the Army. The Chaplain Corps dates back to 29 July 1775, when the Continental Congress authorized one chaplain for each regiment of the Continental Army, with pay equaling that of a captain. In addition to chaplains serving in Continental regiments, many militia regiments counted chaplains among their ranks.(1) Since the Revolutionary War, the chaplains have served in every American War.

The mission of the U.S. Army Chaplains Corps is to provide religious support to America's Army. Chaplains advise commanders to ensure the 'free exercise' rights for all Soldiers are upheld - including those who hold no faith.

Chaplains perform religious support activities according to their faith and conscience and provide religious support of other faith groups by coordinating with another chaplain or qualified individual to perform the support needed. (2)

(1) from an article on the website "THE ARMY HISTORICAL FOUNDATION"
(2) reprinted from the US Army website

Most of us have heard the history of the Four Chaplains, and their acts of heroism and sacrifice in the face of certain death. But there are many other members of the Chaplain Corps that have gone above and beyond in service to those they serve. As of 2021, there have been 8 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients who were members of the US Army Chaplain Corps, beginning in 1862, through 2013, and 2 members of the USN Chaplain Corps, which I also included below:

Chaplain (Leutinent) VINCENT ROBERT CAPODANNO (USN), Vietnam War; Chaplain (Captain) Charles Liteky, Vietnam War; Chaplain (Major) Charles Watters, Vietnam War; Chaplain (Captain) Emil Kapaun, Korean War; Chaplain ((Lt Cmdr) JOSEPH TIMOTHY O'CALLAHAN (USN), WWII; Musician Calvin Titus, while serving as a chaplain assistant, China Relief Mission, Boxer Rebellion; Chaplain Milton Lorenzo Haney, Civil War; Chaplain (First Lieutenant) James Hill, Civil War; Chaplain Francis B. Hall, Civil War; Chaplain John Whitehead, Civi

FROM OUR POST CHAPLAIN....

Kurt Larson has been a participant in the Wreaths Across America and would like to be sure that any legion member interred at the Cemetery of the Alleghenies receives one of these wreaths yearly.

If anyone knows of any veteran buried there, could they please get that veteran's name and any information to him: You can email him at Kurt Larson,, kipawakurt@gmail.com.

SAL Officers
2024-2025 year

Commander	Butch Singleton
Treasurer	John McCullough
1st Vice	Mike Fisher
2nd Vice	Ken Fleming
Chaplain	Alex Pompeo
Adjutant	Gene Miketa
Sgt-At-Arms	Paul Montel

LEGACIES ALIVE

Legacies Alive recently held the Annual Gold Star Families bike run, which began and ended at the Baden American Legion. Turnout was great, and even though storm clouds threatened for quite a bit of the day, the rain seemed to hold off.

If you want to know more about Legacies Alive and what they do, go to their website: https://legaciesalive.com/

POPPIES, POPPIES, POPPIES

"In 1924, the distribution of poppies became a national program of The American Legion.

Led by the American Legion Auxiliary, each year members of The American Legion Family distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs."

above reprinted directly from the American Legion website

Bob Pudo has been the face of the poppy drive for the Baden American Legion for at least 10 years.

Bob was in the U.S. Navy for 6 years, received the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Bob has been with the Baden American Legion for 53 years, and has been a driving force behind poppy donations received for more than 10 years.

There are many members of the post that are out there with poppies, hoping for donations, and it is successful because it's a team effort. However, we are giving a shout-out this month to Bob for his dedication and hard work every year to the poppy drive. This year the post poppy fund received over $13,000,. Of that, Bob was responsible for bringing in over $10,000. And he has brought in that much each year for at least the past 10 years. This would be a great achievement for any post member, and we want to thank Bob for his continued dedication and hard work for the good of our veterans.

CHANGE IN SERVICE OFFICER HOURS

New Service Officer Information

Effective June 21, 2024, we will no longer have scheduled hours at the post.

If you need to meet with a Service Officer, we will schedule an appointment that works for you (days, afternoons, and evenings)

Your Service Officers are:
Larry Mcgown and Randy Gleason

You can contact Larry at 724-630-3318 or by email: lmcgownpost641so@gmail.com

You can contact Randy at 724-987-0497 or by email: gleason241@comcast.net

AMERICAN LEGION

BE THE ONE

BADEN COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE
BADEN AMERICAN LEGION POST 641
BANQUET HALL

271 STATE STREET – BADEN – PENNSYLVANIA 15005

THURSDAY - JULY 11, 2024
12:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Register today by visiting redcrossblood.org
We have 61 appointments available. Walk-ins are always welcome.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 17
at the
Baden Lions Club

HOME
ASSOCIATION
PICNIC
details to follow

August 20, 6 pm
at the
Baden American
Legion

Dinner, followed by
installation of
officers

2024-2025 Officers

COMMANDER	**GERRY STATES**
1st VICE	**PETE PONINSKY**
2nd VICE	**BEN GINGERELLA**
ADJUTANT	**TOM STACHURA**
TREASURER	**DANNIELLE RIPPER**
SERVICE OFFICER	**LARRY MCGOWN**
	RANDY GLEASON

DISTRICT 26 COMMANDER (RETURNING) **JEFF OLSON**

WEEKLY BOOK DETAILS

$5 PER ENTRY

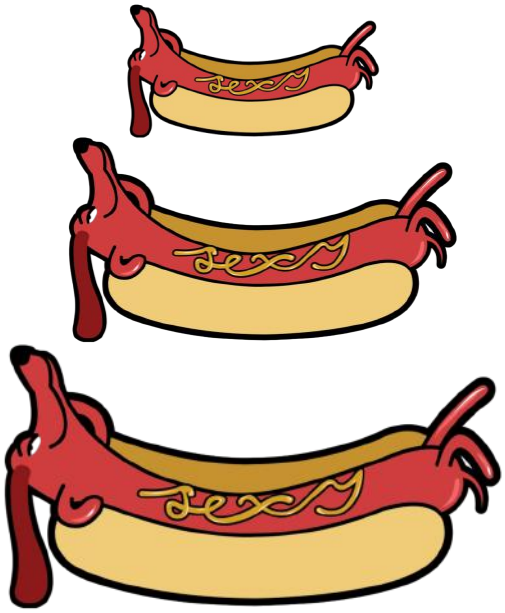
1 ENTRY PER WEEK

BOOK PULLED SUNDAY @ 7pm

IF YOU ARE PRESENT, YOU RECEIVE THE FULL BOOK AMOUNT

IF YOU ARE NOT PRESENT, YOU RECEIVE HALF THE BOOK AMOUNT!!

GOOD LUCK!!



WEENIE WEDNESDAY

Once a month...
this month it will be on July 17th, beginning at 11 am, until sold out

Keystone Boys and Girls State

It's getting to be that time of year. We currently have 1 candidate for Keystone Boys State and another possible candidate.

The Samsung American Legion Scholarship online application process is now open. Use the link at the bottom of this page. Please read through the requirements of this page before applying.

Deadline

Scholarship applicants must **complete and submit their online application prior to 11:59 (local time) of Day 1 of their respective American Legion Boys State or American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program.** All applications must be submitted using the online application system and **may not be modified after the due date or given a deadline extension under any circumstance.**

Scholarship applications are limited to students between their junior and senior years of high school who attend the current session of either an American Legion Boys State or American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program and are a direct descendant - i.e. child, grandchild, great grandchild, etc. Stepchildren and legally adopted children are considered direct descendants of a wartime U.S. military veteran who served on active duty during at least one of the periods of war officially designated as eligibility dates for American Legion membership.

Applicants who are direct descendants of Korean War Era Veterans will receive three bonus points.

THURSDAY EVENINGS 7 PM

A MOMENT OF SILENCE WILL BE OBSERVED BEFORE BINGO FOR OUR DEPARTED SERVICEMEN AND SERVICEWOMEN AND THOSE NON-MILITARY WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE PROTECTION OF OUR NATION

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL SCHEDULE
THROUGH WEEK 6-JULY 8, 2024

WEEK 2

June 3 @ 6:00 pm
Hopewell @ Ambridge
New Brighton @ Laurel
Center-Monaca @ Beaver
Blackhawk Off

June 5 @ 6:00 pm
Beaver @ New Brighton
Laurel @ Hopewell
Ambridge @ Blackhawk
Center-Monaca Off

WEEK 3

June10 @ 6:00 pm
New Brighton @ Blackhawk
Center-Monaca @ Ambridge
Beaver @ Laurel
Hopewell Off

June 12 @ 6:00 pm
Laurel @ Center-Monaca
Ambridge @ New Brighton
Blackhawk @ Hopewell
Beaver Off

Week 4

June 17 @ 6:00 pm
Ambridge @ Beaver
Blackhawk @ Center-Monaca
Hopewell @ New Brighton
Laurel Off

June 19 @ 6:00 pm
Laurel @ Blackhawk
Beaver @ Hopewell
Center-Monaca @ New Brighton
Ambridge Off

June 21 @ 6:00 pm
Hopewell @ Center-Monaca
Blackhawk @ Beaver
Ambridge @ Laurel
New Brighton Off

WEEK 5

June 24 @ 6:00 pm
Ambridge @ Hopewell
Laurel @ New Brighton
Beaver @ Center-Monaca
Blackhawk Off

June 26 @ 6:00 pm
New Brighton @ Beaver
Hopewell@ Laurel
Blackhawk @ Ambridge
Center-Monaca Off

WEEK 6

July 1 @ 6:00 pm
Blackhawk @ New Brighton
Ambridge @ Center-Monaca
Laurel @ Beaver
Hopewell Off

July 2 @ 6:00 pm
Center-Monaca @ Laurel
New Brighton @ Ambridge
Hopewell @ Blackhawk
Beaver Off

July 8 @ 6:00 pm
Beaver @ Ambridge
Center-Monaca @ Blackhawk
New Brighton @ Hopewell
Laurel Off

POW/MIA NEWS

Defense Dept POW/MIA Accounting Agency
As of July, 2024

World War II 72,053
Korean War 7,466
Vietnam War 1,575
Cold War 126
Gulf War 5
Libya 1

from the website "Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

POW/MIA SERVICEMEMBERS THAT WERE RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR

According to the Defense Dept POW/MIA Accounting Agency, 109 military members missing in action have been identified so far this year.

In June 2024, missing in action that were identified included 7 WWII soldiers, 1 soldier from Vietnam, and 4 Korean war missing.

if you are searching for someone who is/was MIA, check this website:
https://www.dpaa.mil/

BUFFALO SOLDIER FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

In case you missed it, I check the Defense Department POW/MIA Accounting Agency website regularly to keep up with current identification of missing military members. On June 24 of this year there was an article on a missing Buffalo soldier who was recently identified. Since this month is the anniversary of the formation of the Buffalo soldiers I thought it was appropriate to provide the story on this particular soldier.

Three months after the World War II battle at the Cinquale Canal in northwest Italy, searchers with the U.S. Army's Graves Registration Service found the remains of an American soldier buried in an isolated location.

Company L of the 366th Regiment, was particularly hard hit and lost 13 men that day, including Pfc. Lemuel Dent Jr., from Charles County, Md.. He was was lost in the aftermath of the fighting. But this month, the Pentagon's agency that works to account for missing service members announced that 79 years after the Feb. 8, 1945, battle, the soldier in the grave has been identified as those of Dent. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) said the identification was part of an ongoing project to account for the roughly 50 men from the 92nd Division who were listed as missing in action during World War II. The 92nd was called the Buffalo Division, after a name initially given to African American soldiers who served in the western United States in the late 1800s.

Dent, who was 30 when he was killed and hailed from rural Ironsides, Md., is only the fourth soldier from the division to be identified, and the first one in five years, the DPAA said.

When the remains in the grave were found near the battlefield on May 5, 1945, the Army believed the soldier had been a member of the 92nd Division. But there was no way at the time to make an identification. At that time his remains were designated "unknown" and buried in what is now the Florence American Cemetery, just south of the Italian city.

Seven hundred men from the 92nd Division gave their lives in Italy, the DPAA said, and thousands more were wounded. Almost half of the men still unaccounted for are from the 366th Regiment.

above reprinted from an article By MICHAEL E. RUANE SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST • June 24, 2024

AMERICAN LEGION

BE THE ONE

Find out about this program by going to the legion website https://www.legion.org/betheone/about

LEGION BASEBALL PLAYOFF
INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED TO THE BADEN AMERICAN LEGION WEBSITE AND THE FACEBOOK PAGE AS SOON AS THE SCHEDULE HAS BEEN SET

https://www.badenpost641.org/
https://www.facebook.com/Badenpost641/

FYI

Pennsylvania State Department Convention is July 18 thru 21st, at the Hilton Hotel in Harrisburgh

VA NEWS FOR JULY 2024

VA OFFERS DISASTER RELIEF RESOURCES FOR VA DEPTS

July 3, 2024
VA Dept Management Center

If you are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to repay your VA debt because of a natural disaster, relief options are available.

Temporary suspensions

For suspension of benefit debt, Veterans and beneficiaries can contact the VA Debt Management Center via Ask VA at https://ask.va.gov (select Veterans Affairs-Debt as the category) or call 800-827-0648.

For suspension of medical care and pharmacy copayment debt, Veterans and beneficiaries can contact the Health Resource Center by calling 866-400-1238.

Other debt relief options

To learn more about other debt relief options such as waivers and repayment plans, Veterans can visit the Manage VA Debt web page at https://va.gov/manage-va-debt.

For more information on debt relief options for VA Benefit debt, Veterans and beneficiaries can contact the VA Debt Management Center via Ask VA at https://ask.va.gov (select Veterans Affairs-Debt as the category) or call 800-827-0648.

For more information on debt relief options for medical care and pharmacy copayment debt, Veterans and beneficiaries can contact the Health Resource Center by calling 866-400-1238.

To learn more about disaster assistance resources for Veterans, visit the Disaster Assistance website

VA extends presumptions of service connection for three new cancer types

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 14, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is including three new cancer types in the list of presumed service-connected disabilities due to military environmental exposure under the PACT Act. This announcement marks the continued commitment under the Biden-Harris administration's Unity Agenda and the Biden Cancer Moonshot to support the nation's Veterans.

Through a sub-regulatory policy letter published to the Federal Register, the following three cancer types have been included in the list of presumptive diseases:

Male breast cancer.
Urethral cancer.
Cancer of the paraurethral glands.

This policy establishes presumptions of service connection for eligible Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans who deployed to Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire Southwest Asia theater of operations, which includes Iraq. Presumptive service connection means VA automatically assumes service connection for the disease and provides benefits to eligible Veterans who have submitted claims with evidence of a diagnosis.

Any Veteran who currently has or previously had one of the listed cancers at any time during military service or after separation may be entitled to disability compensation benefits dated back to Aug. 10, 2022, the date the PACT Act was signed into law. VA will review all claims from impacted Veterans and survivors who previously filed and were denied for these three conditions on or after Aug. 10, 2022, to determine if benefits can now be granted. Veterans enrolled in VA health care can obtain cancer screening and treatment at VA, which recently announced expansion of cancer care services closer to where Veterans are.

AMERICAN LEGION
BE THE ONE

Find out about this program by going to the legion website https://www.legion.org/betheone/about

BUDDY CHECK BUDDY CHECK BUDDY CHECK

IN MEMORIAM

no reported deaths for this month

"My final salute
I render today
I'm still a soldier
I'm just on my way"

final verse from the poem "I'm Still A Soldier" by Timothy Emmons

VETERAN AFFAIRS CONTACT INFORMATION

VA health benefits hotline
877-222-8387
Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

My HealtheVet help desk
877-327-0022
Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

Veterans Crisis Line
988, Select 1
Hours: **24/7**

MyVA411 main information line
800-698-2411
Hours: 24/7

VA benefits hotline
800-827-1000
Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET

EMAIL AND WEBSITES

www.badenpost641.org District 26 FB https://www.facebook.com/PALegionDistrict26
Women Vets of Beaver County https://www.facebook.com/SisterhoodVets
Email: legionbaden@comcast.net
AMERICAN LEGION website: mylegion.org
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FB PAGE https://www.facebook.com/Baden641auxiliary

PTSD IS AN ONGOING DAILY STRUGGLE FOR MILLIONS OF VETERANS SO I DECIDED THAT THE INFORMATION ON THESE 2 PAGES IS TOO IMPORTANT TO NOT RE-RUN THIS INFORMATION AT THIS TIME

PTSD Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder. In the past it was referred to as shell shock, battle fatigue, or combat stress reaction, it became known as PTSD in 1980, when it was recognized as an official mental health disorder.

Personally, I think society has become a bit too comfortable with using PTSD as a catch-all phrase for when something happens to upset them. I over-heard a couple of teen age girls last year complaining about having PTSD because one of them went to prom and another girl was wearing the same prom dress. She was so upset, she "was gonna have PTSD from the trauma". She really said that, which is why it stuck with me. These kinds of things trivialize what PTSD is.

PTSD became a diagnosis with influence from a number of social movements, such as Veteran, feminist, and Holocaust survivor advocacy groups. Research about Veterans returning from combat was a critical piece to the creation of the diagnosis. So, the history of what is now known as PTSD often references combat history. (1)

Accounts of psychological symptoms following military trauma date back to ancient times. The American Civil War (1861-1865) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) mark the start of formal medical attempts to address the problems of military Veterans exposed to combat. European descriptions of the psychological impact of railroad accidents also added to early understanding of trauma-related conditions. (1)

Initially PTSD was considered to be an "anxiety-related" disorder, but over the years after research and increased knowledge about those who suffered with PTSD, it was moved to the category "trauma and stressor-related" disorders. To be diagnosed with PTSD an individual will "present with four different types of symptoms: reliving the traumatic event (also called re-experiencing or intrusion); avoiding situations that are reminders of the event; negative changes in beliefs and feelings; and feeling keyed up (also called hyperarousal or over-reactive to situations). Most people experience some of these symptoms after a traumatic event, so PTSD is not diagnosed unless all four types of symptoms last for at least a month and cause significant distress or problems with day-to-day functioning."(1)

Just as the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD has evolved over the years, so has the treatment. The VA has been working diligently to develop multi-focused treatment options. The National Center for PTSD was created by an act of Congress in 1989. Some veterans have tried "out-of-the-box" treatments to relieve their symptoms, because conventional therapies haven't worked for them, or only worked for the short-term.

If you believe that you, or someone you know is suffering from PTSD, there is help out there. The first step is recognizing the symptoms. They may include:

1 .**Reliving the event (also called re-experiencing symptoms).** Memories of the traumatic event can come back at any time. They can feel very real and scary. For example:

- You may have nightmares.
- You may feel like you are going through the event again. This is called a flashback.
- You may see, hear or smell something that causes you to relive the event. This is called a trauma reminder, cue or trigger. News reports, seeing an accident, or hearing fireworks are examples of trauma reminders.

2. **Avoiding things that remind you of the event.** You may try to avoid situations or people remind you of the trauma event. You may even avoid talking or thinking about the event. For example:

- You may avoid crowds because they feel dangerous.
- You may avoid driving if you were in a car accident or if your military convoy was bombed.
- If you were in an earthquake, you may avoid watching movies about earthquakes.
- You may keep very busy or avoid getting help so you don't have to think or talk about the event.

3. **Having more negative thoughts and feelings than before the event.** The way you think about yourself, and others may become more negative because of the trauma. For example:

- You may feel numb—unable to have positive or loving feelings toward other people—and lose interest in things you used to enjoy.
- You may forget about parts of the traumatic event or not be able to talk about them.
- You may think the world is completely dangerous, and no one can be trusted.
- You may feel guilt or shame about the event, wishing you had done more to keep it from happening.

PTSD Sypmtoms, cont'd

4. Feeling on edge or keyed up (also called hyperarousal). You may be jittery, or always alert and on the lookout for danger. You might suddenly become angry or irritable. For example:
o You may have a hard time sleeping.
o You may find it hard to concentrate.
o You may be startled by a loud noise or surprise.
o You might act in unhealthy ways, like smoking, abusing drugs or alcohol, or driving aggressively.

The above list of symptoms is taken directly from the National Center for PTSD. If you recognize these symptoms in either yourself or someone else, GET HELP. Talk to your primary care doctor, your VA doctor.
·PTSD Treatment Programs
All Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers provide PTSD treatment, and many locations around the county offer specialized PTSD programs.
·Care for Women Veterans
Many VA Medical Centers offer mental health programs specifically for women Veterans. Learn about these services and the role of the Women Veterans Program Manager, the advocate for women's care at every Medical Center.
·Vet Centers
Many Veterans and their families use Vet Centers, often staffed by Veterans, for support. These community-based centers focus on counseling and services to help with the transition from military to civilian life or after military trauma. Learn more about Vet Center programs and ways to connect.
·VA Benefits and Claims
The claims process can be complicated, but don't let that stop you from applying for the VA benefits you may be entitled to. There are Department of Veterans Affairs, nonprofits, and state agencies that can help.

June may be PTSD awareness month, but we should always be aware of PTSD and how it affects our veterans and their families as well. Keep in mind that when we treat the veteran, we are also treating their family members. And as we treat and support the family members, they are better able to support the veteran who is coping, or trying to cope, with PTSD. Finally, it needs to be said that anyone dealing with PTSD needs the support of the community. There is a saying that's been around for a LONG time--it takes a village to raise a child. Well in reference to helping to heal from PTSD, that veteran, and family members, need the support and caring of the community. That truly can make the difference in their journey to healing/recovery for veterans/family members.

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The list of symptoms and information on getting help is reprinted in full from the NATIONAL CENTER FOR PTSD website.

And remember that a loved ones' suffering with PTSD also affects you, the spouse, child, sibling, parent, friend...it affects the community because you are part of the community!!

For those veterans who feel there is no help, please, don't give up. There is someone out there who has likely been where you are and CAN help you, or get you the help you need. DON'T MAKE THAT FINAL CHOICE THAT YOU CAN'T COME BACK FROM, AND THAT YOUR FAMILY WILL *NEVER* RECOVER FROM!!